



PFLAG EDMONTON

Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays

NOVEMBER 1995

NEXT MEETING:

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 21, '95

7:30pm

BOYSTOWN CAFE

10112 - 124 St

LOWER FLOOR

Some parking is available behind the cafe.

We welcome parents, brothers, sisters and spouses of/and lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgendered, etc.

Coffee will be served!

Contributions to this newsletter are most welcome! e.g. information, cartoons, stories - especially those related to the often long, slow coming-out process for both parents and their daughters and sons. Please give anything that you think might be even remotely related to Ellen at a meeting, or mail to:



THANKYOU!

PFLAG EDMONTON: UPDATE

The following information is provided so that both members who have been unable to attend meetings and possible future

members may know what is currently happening in our PFLAG



Edmonton group.



PFLAG LIBRARY

Thanks to Jarrett we now have the basics for a wonderful PFLAG library. Librarian Elsie sends the following book list and monthly book review:

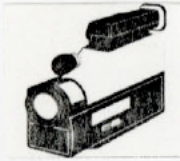
- I IS IT A CHOICE?
by Eric Marcus
- II SUDDEN STRANGERS
by Aaron Fricke
- III THE FAMILY HEART
by Robb Forman Dew
- IV MY SON ERIC
by Mary V. Borhek
- V NOW THAT YOU
KNOW by Betty
Fairchild and Nancy
Hayward

BOOK OF THE MONTH

NOW THAT YOU KNOW
by Betty Fairchild & Nancy
Howard

An excellent first read for parents who are faced with the knowledge that their son or daughter is homosexual. Written by two mothers of gay children it discusses the nature of homosexuality and the effect on the lives of their children, counselling parents how to respond supportively and how to keep families together. The authors tackle many myths and suggest very practical ways whereby parents can deal with their own lack of understanding. The book was originally written in the late 70's and is basically unchanged except for an added chapter which deals with the complex issue of AIDS.

Elsie



PFLAG VIDEO LIBRARY

Over the past five years a number of videos have been collected by members to form a "video library". We thank Ernie for his many hours spent remaking these videos into a practical format for viewing by both our members and the general public. Ernie sends the following list of videos which may now be borrowed from him for viewing:

- *The Gay Gene*, 42min, Austr.
- *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner?* 56min, ABC Austr.
- *Mardi Gras! Gay and Lesbian Parade*, Sydney, 1994, 58min.
- *Brain Sex Parts 1,2 and 3*, 2hr 30 min CBC; and *Sex Under Siege*, 46min.
- *Sexual Orientation; Reading Between the Lines*, 1990, 30min.
- *Who's Afraid of Project 10?* and *Klu Klux Klan* on Sally Jesse Raphael.
- *Gay 90's* by Maria Schoyver, 47min.
- *Doing Time on Maple Drive Coming Out*
- *Why Am I Gay?* and *Just For Fun* (Gay Bashing)
- *Growing Up Gay*
- *Between Consenting Adults*, 2hr
- *Queer Son*, a PFLAG mother's documentary by Vickie Seitchik, 48min
- *Serving in Silence; the Margarethe Cammermeyer Story*

- *Gay Teens*, 40min & *Out*, 49min & *Greg Louganis on Oprah*, 23min (all on one tape)

Gay Youth Suicide, 40min

Ernie



PFLAG: INFO/SUPPORT LINES

The following update comes from Lynne who has spent innumerable hours talking with and counselling callers:

The telephone line is always open for business and business has been very good indeed. I average three to four calls per week seeking several kinds of information, such as:

- Inquiries about PFLAG from both gays and lesbians for their parents;
- parents seeking info on their own;
- info for other support groups such as where one parent or the other is gay;
- many calls looking for a gay bar;
- calls from lesbians/gays looking for lesbian/gay groups, dances, etc.;

A lot of calls have been forwarded to GLCC (Gay and Lesbian Community Centre).

Terry has been a terrific help in handling some calls when men just want to seek the advice of another man. I have even called upon my daughter to answer a few inquiries. Thanks to everyone who has been such a great help to me!

PFLAG EDMONTON

I also receive calls from organizations or groups wanting us to go out to speak in places such as the University of Alberta (Outreach) and from Catholic Social Services, local newspapers and radio stations.

I guess I spend a lot of time on the phone answering the calls, but it makes it all worthwhile when you know you have been a big help in supporting each and every one who takes that first step!

Lynne



PFLAG SUPPORT MEETINGS

Support meetings are held the third Tuesday of each month at 10112-124 ST @7:30pm. Phone Cindy [redacted] or Lynne [redacted] to confirm.

This fall thirty-five to forty-five people have been attending support meetings. There has been much tears, laughter and good-will. People are truly amazing when they are free to express their feelings or to opt to say nothing - whatever they feel most comfortable with. Those attending include not only parents of lesbians, bisexuals and gays but also lesbian, bisexual and gay parents. First-time attendees receive support not only from PFLAG members but often from each other. All of us find we learn so much from each other!

Ellen

PFLAG SPEAKERS BUREAU

Oct 24/95 Dale and Cindy were asked to tell the AIDS Buddy Support of Edmonton about PFLAG.

Oct 27/95 U of A Sociology Class: Tracy Gordon of Planned Parenthood invited Cindy to speak about being a parent of a gay son. Ian, Chris and Cam joined the group to tell their stories, followed by questions from the audience who received very honest and frank answers from these young men.

Nov 1/95: Gay Men's Outreach Crew sponsored "Coming Out in the 90's". Terry and Cindy told "their stories" followed by an active question period with questions ranging from "Do you worry about AIDS?" to "Will you adopt me?" We will be doing this again in the February session.

Cindy

PFLAG EDUCATION

At the October 22-24, 1995 *Child Welfare League of Canada Annual National Conference*, PFLAG Edmonton participated with a workshop and two display tables. This gave our PFLAG group an opportunity to develop contacts with social workers and others who work with troubled teens in New Brunswick, Don Mills (Toronto), and several parts of Alberta.

Most popular of over fifty literature items was *The Dynamics of Sexual Orientation & Adolescent Suicide* by Dr. Ian Kroll and Dr. Lorne Warneke, Chief Psychiatrist at the Grey Nuns Hospital, Edmonton. This 60-page document with over 300 references is "Everything you wanted to know about sexual

orientation and teen suicide but didn't know where to ask". Priced at \$4.99 it was a terrific bargain for those working with, and/or concerned about, teenagers.

The PFLAG workshop, slotted at 3:15 - 4:30 on the third and last day of the conference was attended by 10 people, most with strong personal concerns about homosexual orientation issues. They left expressing much gratitude for the opportunity to talk to supportive people who offered them caring and helpful advice. And we felt very rewarded for the opportunity to help them!

Many thanks to all who participated - Blanche, Bob, Bryan, Cindy, Carol, Dale, Elsie, Ernie, Graham, Jenny, Lawrence, Lynne, Shirley, Stan, and Terry!

Ellen

FOR SALE!

- PFLAG Edmonton T- Shirts

Members: \$10

Nonmembers: \$15

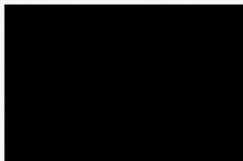
- Golden PFLAG Lapel Pins

Members: \$1.50

Nonmembers: \$2.50

- PFLAG memberships and/or donations are vital to the successful attainment of our PFLAG goals. **PLEASE HELP!**

Please contact Cindy [redacted] or Ellen [redacted] either by phone, at a meeting or by mail:



PFLAG

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PFLAG: EDUCATION

SEATTLE

FROM THE SPEAKER'S PODIUM

by Kay Rae Chomic

(Courtesy Parents BANNER, Seattle, Tacoma)

Earlier this year I was part of a PFLAG panel presentation at a Bellevue high school. I felt privileged and scared. Privileged to be part of the education process and share myself as an "out" lesbian. Scared because though I see teenagers on the street and in the media, I rarely interact with them. I admit my 40-something psyche decided to fear the unfamiliar.

Fear of *teenagers* as a group. Isn't that interesting? The misconceptions and stereotypes floating around in my head fueled my fear. Analyzing my feelings helped me correlate my fear to the fear that some heterosexuals have of *homosexuals*, as a group. My fear, based on ignorance and lack of communication, was natural and irrational. The good news is that after interacting with two groups of thirty students in two hours, my fear dissolved. I found them to be caring, unique interesting and intelligent human beings.

I was proud to be part of this panel. We were a diverse group - two gay men, a mother of a gay teen, and myself. Each of us offered a different perspective on the "gay lifestyle" showing that as in the

straight community, we are different but similar. The students' intelligent and respectful questions reflected their openness and natural curiosity. Our panel replied to their questions with forthright sincerity. We communicated the truth about being homosexual - we work, play, struggle, love, set goals, eat, sweat and watch movies - just like everyone else. Each of us related some of the difficulties, sadness, pride and joy of the coming out process.

I shared my personal understanding that sexuality is complex and my belief that it is a continuum where at one end, a person may live her whole life as a heterosexual. At the other end, she may live her whole life as a homosexual, or journey between these two poles directed by the stages of her life. At no point on this continuum is she good or bad. She just is.

After our discussion I was elated for having faced and eliminated a fear. I felt respect for these teens and am eager to interact with them again and be enriched by their uniqueness and vibrant energy. This was one of the best experiences I've ever had!



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

PFLAG EDMONTON

Gay Pride Parade - Vancouver - August, 1995:

I happened to be in Vancouver during the Gay Pride Parade and decided to march with the Vancouver chapter of PFLAG. I contacted Stan and his wife and they were very glad to have me join in the walk with them. It was pouring down rain but it did not discourage parade participants or people along the route. PFLAG is so well recognized in Vancouver and those along the route would call out, "We love You PFLAG!" and give us the thumbs up signal. Some even ran out to give us a hug and it was so uplifting! My heart just swelled with pride. What a positive and rewarding experience. A **BIG** "Thank You" to Vancouver. I feel very privileged to have walked in your parade and if circumstances permit, I would be very pleased to do so again!

Lynne

The following excerpt from the Vancouver Sun, courtesy PFLAG Vancouver, further describes that rainy day:

By Petti Fong

The biggest difference in the Pride Parade Monday was not between the flamboyant and the quiet, or those gay and those not.

It was between the wet and the dry.

Spectators and participants who lined up from Denman to Sunset Beach became instant friends when they offered shelter under an umbrella.

Police estimate between 15,000 to 20,000 people showed up for the 17th annual Pride Parade. The parade and concert afterwards at Sunset Beach is the biggest public event for gays and lesbians in the Lower Mainland...

More than 75 floats representing organizations and businesses supportive of the gay and lesbian community were entered in the parade....

Dove Thompson, 19, said some of her friends are gays and bisexuals. "I'm straight but I'm glad I'm here. We are all people with rights to live together."

"More and more young people are coming out of the closet and coming to the parades to show their support", said Guin Lalena, 20, who identified herself as gay. "I think it's important for us to be here. If I let them know it's not a big thing then maybe younger women wouldn't feel uncomfortable..."

Pat Hogan, vice-chair of special events for Pride Day events said, "It seems to me quite a lot of kids are here. They've been really supportive of each other and they count on each other. That's what it's all about."

As the last float moved through the crowd, thousands of supporters marched behind a few short blocks to the concert stage to hear music drown out the rain.

CHRISTMAS

PARTY!

Saturday, Dec 2, '95

8:00 pm

10112-124 St, Upper Floor

Cash Bar

\$3 at the door

EVERYBODY WELCOME!

Finger foods, cash bar, free view!



IT'S A GAY LIFE!

November 1995

DAVE LEVY...LEVELS!

Coming Out in High School

(Courtesy "Sex Talk", Vol. 1, Number 2, Jan '95, Dept of Public Health, Toronto)

Dave Levy will never forget the devastating isolation and loneliness he felt at junior high, where other students called him "fag" and "queer".

"In junior high you have the one person that everyone picks on and I was that person," says the 19-year-old Grade 12 student.

Until last year when he wrote an article for the school newspaper on being gay, Levy had spent years trying to repress his sexual orientation. "It's kind of like when you repress the crazy family member, but instead of locking someone else away, I was repressing everything inside of myself," he says.

The emotional and physical burdens were intense. "I told everybody I went to my (Toronto) high school because of the music program, but the main reason was to escape everybody I went to junior high with," he says. "I didn't have a social life until I came out (as gay). I never wanted one. To get my mind off everything, I applied myself to my schoolwork and my music, playing the double bass".

Levy found the help he needed to accept himself through a support

photo credit: Merilee Brand



Dave Levy

program run by the Toronto Board of Education. Many students don't.

"Research shows that 50% of lesbian and gay youth have thought of killing themselves, and 35% have tried," says John McCullagh, leader of the Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Youth Project at the Metro Children's Aid Project at the Metro Children's Aid Society. Their suicide rate is 3 to 5 times higher than that of their peers. They're overrepresented on the case loads of most youth agencies and significantly over represented in the street youth population.

Many of these youth are disowned by their parents and forced to leave home. Some are physically attacked, says McCullagh. Between 20% and 40% of street youth are gay, lesbian or bisexual, he adds. "Gay and lesbian people are at very high risk and in a caring society we have to do something about it."

In addition to the usual pressures of growing up, gay and lesbian youth struggle with the fundamental issue of "Who am I?" says Robb Travers, of Central Toronto Youth Services' (CTYS) Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Youth Program. For a long time there was nowhere for them to go, nowhere for them to get help. Many social workers and educators either didn't recognize that these youth had issues with sexual identity, or didn't want to deal with those issues because of their own homophobia.

Now, he says, "we're seeing a very slow shift of recognition on the part of service providers that their own personal biases regarding homosexuality cannot be allowed to affect the level of service delivery that they provide to their clients."

"I think a lot of service providers are recognizing that these kids are on their caseloads because of pressure in the outside world. They're ending up depressed and suicidal and using substances in high numbers," says Travers.

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Among lesbian, gay and bisexual students, there is a common perception that guidance counselors can't help them with their problems, says Levy. "They don't know what you're going through."

But a sensitive teacher, social worker or guidance counselor can make the difference between a student getting help and not getting help. Levy says it was the Toronto Board's support program that really helped him accept his homosexuality. He had been referred there by a school vice principal after coming out to a few friends.

Why did he write that article for the school newspaper? "I thought there was a possibility I could help someone who was going through what I had gone through," he says. "It definitely shocked a lot of people...But I was at the point where I knew who my friends were in school...and I knew that I had all my friends outside of school, so I had nothing to lose."

Many other students are still at the stage where they have lots to lose.

(Editor's Note: SEX TALK is produced five times a year by sexual health staff at the City of Toronto: Department of Public Health, 277 Victoria St., 6th Floor., Toronto, Ontario, M5B 1W1.

To submit ideas or material, or add your name to the mailing lists, please call Bonnie Bean, Sexual Health Program Coordinator at 416-392-7451 or fax 416-392-1483.)



Bed & Breakfast Services
Hosts: Carol & Bryan

15615 - 81 Street
Edmonton, Alberta
Canada T5Z 2T6

ph: (403) 456-5928

EVENTS CALENDAR

QUEER VIEW MIRROR

an Anthology

International lesbian and gay short short fiction - a provocative and liberating collection of more than 100 queer snapshots that look at the world from brave new perspectives.

Friday, November 24, '95

7:30 pm

**Orlando Books
10640 Whyte Avenue**

Readings from *Queer View Mirror: Lesbian & Gay Short Short Fiction* - 101 captivating snapshots of queer life by lesbian and gay writers edited by James C. Johnstone and Karen X. Tulchinsky. Readers include Lethbridge contributor **Bente Hansen**, Edmonton contributor **Graham Watts** and

IT'S A GAY LIFE!

Daniel Cunningham of
Edmonton.

Free Admission to all events!
Everyone welcome!

LIATRIS SOCIETY

Friday, November 17, '95

Slide Night &

1996 Committee Elections

For further information please
contact Sue: [REDACTED]

SONGS FOR US

Saturday, November 25, '95

8:00 pm

Convocation Hall

University of Alberta

The highlight of the Edmonton Vocal Minority (EVM) season opener is Richard Link's choral masterpiece, *Songs for Us*, a work commissioned by EVM. It sings of pain and loss, spiritual love and the celebration of life!

QUEER SON

Saturday, December 9, 1995

9:00 pm

Vision TV

(Videotron Ch.22; Shaw Ch. 36)

In this documentary, made by a PFLAG mother of a gay son, parents of gay and lesbian children talk about their journey from guilt and fear to understanding and acceptance. It's a "Don't Miss!"